

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 30**

**Mr. Kenneth Rishel, Superintendent  
Lori DeTrude, Special Education Director**

**Final Report**  
January 12, 2001

**Visit Conducted on:**

**November 7-8, 2000**

**Team Members:**

Harvey Harkness, Chairperson  
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# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

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(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 30**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 30 comprised of the following schools: Preschool Program, Elm Street School, Woodland Heights School, Pleasant Street School, Memorial Middle School, Laconia High School and the Huot Vocational Education Center. The visiting team met on November 7-8 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been identified. If a component is not mentioned although reviewed by the team, no citations of noncompliance to the Standards were found in that particular area.

### **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on January 10-11, 1995.***

The results of this evaluation were reviewed on-site by the Department of Education on June 6, 1996. The Progress Report filed by the Department on June 20, 1996 stated attainment of compliance with all of the findings contained in the Final Evaluation Report dated February 7, 1995.

### **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

As the visiting team carried out their varied activities, several issues of significance surfaced. The first issue was related to facilities. The condition of the facilities at the Elm Street and Pleasant Street Schools are crowded and do not provide effective learning environments for children with disabilities. Classes in hallways, nooks and crannies cause difficulties with student concentration, interruption of lessons, visual and auditory distractions, access to a variety of learning materials and unnecessary hindrances for teacher planning and evaluation of improved student performance.

In reviewing the special education process, the team found paperwork that varied in quality and content. Special education forms did not include a number of required elements and the inconsistent application of district procedures in each school resulted in a large number of documentation citations. It is recommended that the district adopt the revised New Hampshire model forms when issued by the Department of Education. Utilization of the revised forms and faithful adherence with district procedures at each school should correct most, if not all of the documentation omissions noted in this report. The evaluation team noted many services that are provided to students that are not documented in individual education plans. The lack of consistent recording of student services results in staff not being credited with the extent and quality of their services. The team further noted that excessively high caseloads for special education teachers at Laconia High, Woodland Heights and Elm Street

Schools. Staff reported that due to high caseloads, it is necessary to choose between meeting the needs of students and completing paperwork. In each situation, the staff chose students over paperwork.

**IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE**

**Name of Program(s) Visited:** All

**COMMENDATIONS:**

The team noted a number of commendations worthy of recognition.

- Dedication and commitment of the staff to providing quality instruction was evident at each school.
- The district's commitment to a low teacher to pupil ratio and two adults in every K-2 classroom is exceptional and should bear evidence of improved student competency in reading and language arts.
- Scheduled weekly team meetings conducted at preschool through eighth grades throughout the district have resulted in better coordinated services for students with disabilities. The meetings are comprised of special education and regular education staff working together to help students master the goals and objectives of individual education plans.
- Beginning at preschool and continuing through the eighth grade, each school was characterized by a strong commitment to educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The inclusion of students with their peers in the full life of each school has resulted in a culture of collaboration, teamwork and the art of the possible.
- The presence of paraprofessionals in settings for students with disabilities appears to be appropriate and well coordinated at each school. Staff development for paraprofessionals is targeted to provide assistance to aides as they work with particular disabilities and/or students.
- In each school, students and staff exhibited a deep sense of pride and commitment to their school and community.

**CITATIONS:**

**Ed. 1119.06(d) Facilities**

Classrooms and other instructional space for students with disabilities are not sufficient to accommodate programming and student needs.

## **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Elm Street Program 2) Head Start Program 3) Huot Daycare

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- There is flexibility of programs to meet the individual needs of children and families.
- There is a great variety of choices in quality placement options.
- The knowledgeable and dedicated staff are good at problem solving.
- Cross training among professionals is used effectively.
- Parents interviewed were very impressed with supports and services offered to their children.
- There is great collaboration between the community site staff and district staff.
- There is good use of a picture system and other communication systems and methods for discrete trial.
- Individualized supports and services are determined for each child (method, equipment, services, etc.)
- The Preschool has access to wonderful outside consultants
- The preschool is providing articulation therapy to children not coded for services but are considered at-risk.
- There seems to be good collaboration between FCESS and the preschool. District staff begin working with families before the child's third birthday.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.11 3 files: progress reports are unclear to show progress is sufficient to achieve goals.

Ed. 1123.01(a)(7) No public listing of the names and position of persons having access to records.

CFR 300.503(b)(1-7) Federal sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance missing.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Have specific training regarding IEP goals and objectives, tying to functional needs in the classroom and life at home (measurable, descriptions of modifications, involvement in regular curriculum, systematic method of checking progress, etc.)
- Improve documentation in the form of a description or narrative might be very helpful when looking at the progress of each child. Also daily or weekly written documentation (e.g. checklist, observation notes) towards goals rather than just discussion.
- Provide training opportunities for all community providers including classroom aides.
- Provide opportunities for parents to meet/interact with each other. (strategies: inexpensive food, provide childcare, student performances, etc.)
- Stronger written documentation of classroom modifications, particularly for children transitioning to kindergarten or in programs with limited interaction with district staff.
- Consider "stepping stone" modifications towards goals (e.g. for child having difficulty with circle time, perhaps a parallel circle with fewer number of children).

## ELM STREET SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Regular Modified 2) Inclusive Special Ed. Programming

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Staff are very caring, dedicated and willing to do what is necessary to help students succeed.
- Parents and visitors describe staff as communicative and approachable.
- Paraprofessionals attend special education meetings regardless of compensation.
- Professional and paraprofessional staff provide successful “homework help” sessions after school.
- The collaborative system where regular education, special education and paraprofessional staff members meet weekly as a team regarding special education students is very effective in maximizing instructional time and maintaining communication.
- Paraprofessionals included in staff development opportunities and are a valued member of the team.
- The principal and staff are commended for working towards a fully inclusive program
- The principal and student services coordinator attend all IEP meetings.
- Elm Street School principal and staff are commended for efforts in aligning curriculum and IEP goals and objectives with state standards.
- The computer lab with the media assistant is a wonderful asset for students.
- The discrete trial instruction with autistic students and literacy program through Lesley College are great.
- The behavioral management program is effective and staff are supported with in-service opportunities and consultations with behavioral consultants.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(b) 2 files: no date on referral or referral missing.
- Ed. 1107.02(d) 1 file: lacked evidence that parent was given procedural safeguards at referral.
- Ed. 1107.03  
CFR 300.320 1 file: certified examiner not identified for evaluation meeting.
- Ed. 1107.05  
CFR300.352(c)(1)(ii) 1 file: evaluation over 45 days and no extension signed by parent.
- Ed. 1107.07(c)  
CFR300.534(a)(2) 1 file: lacked evidence teacher certified in the area of suspected disability present.  
3 files: lacked evidence that copy of evaluation report and documentation of determination of eligibility given to parent.
- Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: parent given 6-day notice of IEP meeting; no waiver found in file.
- Ed. 1109.01(b)  
CFR300.347(a)(2) 3 files: IEP lacked benchmarks.
- Ed. 1109.01(j) 2 files: IEP lacked providers responsible for implementing IEP.

Ed. 1111.01  
CFR300.307(b)

3 files: lacked evidence of opportunity to participate in physical education.



## ELM STREET SCHOOL, Continued

<u>Ed. 1109.11</u> <u>CFR300.347(a)(7)</u>	3 files: lacked evidence that parents are informed of progress on IEP annual goals. 3 files: progress does not show the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve goals at year-end.
<u>Ed. 1123.04</u> <u>CFR300.563</u>	3 files: no record of disclosure in files.
<u>Ed. 1123.05</u> <u>CFR300.504(a)(2)</u>	1 file: lacked evidence that notice of parental rights given at notice of each IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1125.03</u> <u>CFR300.503(b)(1-7)</u>	2 files: Written prior notice did not contain all content.
<u>CFR300.347(a)(5)(i)</u>	3 files: no indication of modifications for state and district wide assessments on IEP.
<u>CFR300.346(a)(1)(i)</u>	2 files: lacked evidence that parental input and concerns were considered.
<u>CFR300.346(a)(1)(iii)</u>	3 files: lacked evidence that state NHEIAP or statewide testing was considered.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider changing some part time paraprofessionals to full time in order to address speech needs of students.
- Provide additional copies of testing, IEPs, etc. to some parents who pass these on to physicians and counselors.
- Staff would benefit from increased facilities. Space needs are tremendous with special education teachers, specialists and paraprofessionals forced to work in the hallway or small, cramped offices.
- Provide increased communication with parents in understanding the special education process.
- Ensure confidentiality when using volunteers to assist with clerical functions in special education.

## WOODLAND HEIGHTS SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Grade 2 Classroom 2) Grade 3 Classroom 3) Grade 4 Classroom

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Staff are committed to teamwork and full inclusion.
- Regular and special education staff consult weekly.
- Paraprofessionals are provided with weekly training opportunities.
- Training is provided on a regular basis for regular education staff.
- The small class size is beneficial to staff and students.
- Staff effectively use outside resources.
- The special education staff provide support to all students.
- The IEP writing process is a true team effort.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(d) 2 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards given to parents.

Ed. 1107.07 1 file: lacked evidence that parent included on determination of eligibility team.  
CFR300.534(a)(1) 2 files: lacked evidence that evaluation report & documentation of the determination of  
CFR300.534(a)(2) eligibility were given to parents.

Ed. 1109.03 3 files: no record of placement meeting in files.  
CFR300.344

Ed. 1109.11 3 files: lacked evidence of how progress is reported to parents.  
CFR300.347(a)(7)(1)

Ed. 1109.04 3 files: lacked evidence that parental safeguards given at each notice of IEP meeting.  
300.504(a)(2)

Ed. 1111.01 1 file: lacked evidence that ESY was completed within 60 days or by 4/30.  
CFR300.307(b) 1 file: lacked documentation of physical education.

Ed. 1115.06 1 file: lacked evidence of consideration of LRE.  
CFR300.552

Ed. 1123.05 2 files: lacked evidence safeguards given to parents at initial referral.  
CFR300.504(a) 3 files: lacked evidence safeguards given to parents at each notification of IEP meeting.  
2 files: lacked evidence safeguards given to parents at re-evaluation.

Ed. 1125.04(3-4) 2 files: lacked written consent for placement.

CFR300.347(a)(7)(ii) 3 files: lacked documentation of how parents will be informed of student's progress toward annual goals.

CFR300.346(c)

3 files: IEPs did not contain special factor statement.

<b>WOODLAND HEIGHTS SCHOOL, Continued</b>
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CFR300.346(a)(1)(i)    2 files: lacked evidence that parental input and concerns were considered.

CFR300.346(a)(1)(ii)    1 file: lacked evidence that evaluation results were considered.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider reorganizing files to divide information in separate areas (e.g. ASP/IEP, evals, notes, minutes, etc.)
- Improve documentation of activities within the special education process.
- Use recommendations of evaluations when writing IEPs.
- Include receipt that staff received IEP in student files.
- Revise public listing of file access form to meet standards.
- Review caseload size.

## PLEASANT STREET SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Grade 2 Classroom 2) Grade 4 Classroom 3) Grade 5 Classroom

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Administration and community are committed to small class size and having 2 adults in each K-2 classroom.
- The literacy and guided reading programs are strong.
- The school-wide discipline program is very effective.
- Three special education teachers cover K-5 with reasonable caseloads.
- IEPs are well written and are easy to understand.

### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(b) 3 files: no date on receipt of referral.

Ed. 1107.02(d) 3 files: lacked evidence parents received notice of disposition of evaluation.

CFR300.504(a)(1) 1 file: lacked evidence parents received parental safeguards.

CFR300.504(a)(2) 3 files: lacked evidence that parental safeguards given with each notice of IEP meeting.

Ed. 1109.01(g) 2 files: IEP does not include frequency and location of services/modifications.

CFR300.347(a)(6)

Ed. 1109.01(c) 1 file: IEP did not include extent to which student will participate in regular class.

Ed. 1109.01(j) 2 files: IEP did not contain individuals or providers responsible for implementing IEP.

CFR300.347(a)(4) 1 file: did not contain explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disable peers in reg. classes.

CFR300.347(a)(5) 3 files: lacked documentation of student participation in state or district wide achievement tests.

CFR300.347(a)(7)(i) 3 files: lacked documentation of how parents will be informed of student's progress toward annual goals.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Review documentation for special education process. (e.g. use EH deliberations page to document coding decision, be sure referral/WPN states suspected area of disability, examiner reports should give the certification(s), meeting minutes should include attendees with identified role and signature, provide separate parent signature page for IEP, placement proposal and WPN, etc.)
- Clearly document attempts to contact and include the parent in the decision making process.
- The school may want to look at increasing space for the resource room and specialists.
- Consider a part-time secretarial position to assist with special education paperwork.

## MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Modified Regular 2) Life Skills Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Support from administrators is strong and responsive to the needs of staff and students.
- There is a large and varied array of programs and services for special education students.
- Communication between regular and special education personnel is consistent and on going.
- The Learning Center is open to all students.
- Most special education students are included in general curriculum and regular ed. classrooms.
- Staff members are provided with many professional development opportunities.
- Special education teachers are also case managers.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02 2 files: lacked evidence evaluations were completed within 45 days and no signed extension.

Ed. 1107.06(2) 1 file: evaluation was currently in progress although beyond 40 days.

CFR300.534(a)(2) 1 file: did not contain current evaluation, 1997 observation used.

Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: did not contain measurable goals.

Ed. 1109.01(c) 1 file: did not contain evidence of participation in regular ed. classes.

Ed. 1109.01(d) 1 file: did not contain expectations of regular ed. class participation

Ed. 1109.01(f) 1 file: did not include consultation on the IEP as a related service.

Ed. 1109.01(n) 3 files: did not contain documentation of how parents will be informed of student's progress toward annual goals.

CFR300.347

Ed. 1109.04(e-g) 2 files: lacked documentation of how parent(s) were involved in IEP meeting.

CFR300.345(d)(1-3) 1 file: lacked evidence of notice of IEP meeting.

Ed. 1109.11 1 file: lacked documentation of student's progress of IEP goals.

Ed. 1115.06 1 file: lacked evidence of consideration of LRE.

CFR300.552

CFR300.344(a)(2) 2 files: lacked evidence that procedural safeguards given at each notice of IEP meeting.

2 files: did not contain evidence of regular ed. teacher attended IEP meetings.

CFR300.347(a)(7)(i) 3 files: lacked documentation that parents informed of student's progress toward annual goals.

CFR300.347(a)(7)(ii) 3 files: lacked documentation that progress shows extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider reorganizing files to divide information in separate areas (e.g. ASP/IEP, evals, notes, minutes, etc.)
- Clearly document attempts to contact and include the parent in the decision making process.
- Continue to encourage teaching through different modes of learning to address different learning styles, meet accommodations and modifications.
- Consider aligning special education goals and objectives with the NH State Curriculum Frameworks.
- Consider using state model forms or components of the forms to assist in including all components.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LACONIA HIGH SCHOOL</b> <b>HUOT TECHNICAL CENTER</b></p>
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**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Lifeskills 2) Learning Lab 3) Life Science 4) Arts  
5) Vocational Program 6) Health Occupations

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 Files

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- All special education and most regular education staff are well informed, dedicated and caring.
- There is a high cooperation level between staff members.
- The school offers many trainings and professional development opportunities on a volunteer basis.
- The new principal, asst. principal and vocational director are involved and committed to special education students and the process
- The vocational center provides excellent competency based curriculums that allows for even the most severely disabled students to access the minimum competencies which includes problem solving and high tech computer proficiencies.
- Plans are in progress for the “Step” program to become an inclusive pre-vocational program available to all students.
- Computer technology is implemented into the classroom with plans for more.
- Special education teachers promote great opportunities for integration by speaking to classrooms, informing teachers and ongoing consultations. Students are very accepting.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.01 2 files: missing location, type of and amount of services on IEP page.  
CFR 300.437(a)(6)

Ed. 1109.03 1 file: missing student input transition page.  
CFR 300.344(b)(2) 2 files: missing required team members (LEA, reg. Ed. Rep.)  
CFR 300.344(a)(2)(d)

Ed. 109.04 1 file: missing 10-day notice.

CFR 300.346(a)(1)(ii) 1 file missing most recent evaluations

CFR 300.347(a)(4) 1 file missing: explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with non-disabled peers in regular education.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Continue efforts to integrate technology and Internet. Look into existing technology as a springboard for expansion and use what exists.
- Increase active learning methods through training and observation to break “traditional mold”.
- Explore options for creating alternative programs for the current 10-15% at-risk and EH students.
- Continue out reach efforts to increase parent communication and participation.
- Provide for text books in the learning lab for each course taught in the high school. This would enable special education staff to work with individual students in the content areas.



- Attempts should be made to provide joint curriculum planning time for general and vocational educators with assistance from special educators.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LACONIA HIGH SCHOOL, Continued</b> <b>HUOT VOCATIONAL ED. CENTER</b></p>
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- Look for creative ways to provide special education in-service training to those teachers who are resistant to the process.
- The learning lab program is an excellent way to provide a space to take tests and complete homework assignments. IT should not be a substitution for direct instruction and/or remediation.
- Review diploma policy to include recent regulations according to IDEA 97.
- Provide time for special education staff to visit “best schools practices” in high school programs to use as models for improvement.
- Organize files and document services.

**ADDENDUM**

**JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM**

**SAU 30**

**Student File Review**

**Case Study Document**

**Reimbursement Claim Form**

**Case Study Addendum Form**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDENDUM</b> <b>JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</b></p>
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**SAU #30**

**NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:**        3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The coordinator of James O' students is knowledgeable of the decree's requirements and competently fulfills her responsibility. She also knows the details of each child's circumstances and evidenced a high level of professional and personal concern.
- The Laconia School District is commended for taking steps to solve the need of adequate staffing for the coordination of special education.

**CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1130.03</u>	District typically learns of student's whereabouts the day of court hearing and consequently is unable to convene a team and make recommendations.
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**SUGGESTIONS:**

The coordinator of James O' students carries an excessive caseload and related responsibilities. This problem needs to be effectively addressed.